UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/681
9 December 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 76

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Macaire KABORE (Burkina Faso)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Question of Antarctica" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly in accordance with its resolution 47/57 of 9 December 1992.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 24 September 1993, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item on its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 14 October 1993, the First Committee decided that the general debate on consideration of and action on the draft resolution on item 76 should take place on 22 to 24 November. The deliberations on and consideration of the draft resolution on this item took place at the 32nd and 33rd meetings, on 22 and 24 November (see A/C.1/48/SR.32 and 33). Action on the draft resolution on that item took place at the 33rd meeting, on 24 November (see A/C.1/48/SR.33).

4. In connection with item 76, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the state of the environment in Antarctica (A/48/449);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica (A/48/482);

(c) Letter dated 12 July 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting

the documents adopted by the twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (A/48/396-S/26440).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/48/L.57

5. At the 33rd meeting, on 24 November, the representative of Malaysia, on behalf of, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, the Central African Republic, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, (Islamic Republic of), Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Question of Antarctica" (A/C.1/48/L.57), which was later also sponsored by Belize, Kenya, Mauritius and Swaziland.

6. At its 33rd meeting, on 24 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/48/L.57 by a roll-call vote of 71 to none, with 6 abstentions (see para. 7). The voting was as follows: 1/

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Portugal, Turkey, Venezuela.

1/ The following 48 States announced that they were not participating in the vote: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uruguay.

Subsequently, the delegations of Qatar, Sri Lanka and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia indicated that they had intended to vote in favour.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Question of Antarctica

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Antarctica",

Recalling its resolutions 38/77 of 15 December 1983, 39/152 of 17 December 1984, 40/156 A and B of 16 December 1985, 41/88 A and B of 4 December 1986, 42/46 A and B of 30 November 1987, 43/83 A and B of 7 December 1988, 44/124 A and B of 15 December 1989, 45/78 A and B of 12 December 1990, 46/41 A and B of 6 December 1991 and 47/57 of 9 December 1992,

Recalling also the relevant paragraphs of the final documents adopted by the second meeting of States of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, held at Abuja from 25 to 29 June 1990, 2/ the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Istanbul from 4 to 8 August 1991, 3/ the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Governments, held at Harare from 16 to 22 October 1991 4/ and the Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Jakarta from 1 to 6 September 1992, 5/

Taking into account the debates on this item held since its thirty-eighth session,

Reaffirming the principle that the international community is entitled to information covering all aspects of Antarctica and that the United Nations should be made the repository for all such information in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 41/88 A, 42/46 B, 43/83 A, 44/124 B, 45/78 A, 46/41 A and 47/57,

Welcoming the decision of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to submit to the Secretary-General the final report of the Seventeenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, which took place at Venice from 11 to 20 November 1992,

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2/ See A/45/474, annex.

3/ See A/46/486-S/23055, annexes I and III; see Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-sixth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1991, document S/23055.

4/ A/46/708, annex, communiqué, para. 44.

5/ See A/47/675-S/24816, annex; see Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-seventh Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1992, document S/24816.

Conscious of the particular significance of Antarctica to the international community in terms, inter alia, of international peace and security, environment, its effects on global climate conditions, economy and scientific research,

Conscious also of the interrelationship between Antarctica and the physical, chemical and biological processes that regulate the total Earth system,

Welcoming the increasing recognition of the significant impact that Antarctica exerts on the global environment and ecosystems,

Welcoming also the recognition by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, of the value of Antarctica as an area for the conduct of scientific research, in particular research essential to understanding the global environment,

Welcoming further the increasing support, including by some Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, for the establishment of Antarctica as a nature reserve or world park to ensure the protection and conservation of its environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems for the benefit of all mankind,

Welcoming the ongoing trend in acknowledging the need for internationally coordinated scientific research stations in Antarctica in order to minimize unnecessary duplication and logistical support facilities,

Welcoming also the increasing awareness of an interest in Antarctica shown by the international community, and convinced of the advantages to the whole of mankind of a better knowledge of Antarctica,

Reaffirming that the management and use of Antarctica should be conducted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and of promoting international cooperation for the benefit of mankind as a whole,

Convinced of the need for concerted international cooperation in order to protect and safeguard Antarctica and its dependent ecosystems from external environmental disturbances for future generations,

1. Takes note of the report 6/ of the Secretary-General on the report of the Seventeenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, which took place in Venice from 11 to 20 November 1993;

2. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the state of the environment in Antarctica, 7/ and requests the Secretary-General to explore the possibilities of publishing, as official documents of the United Nations,

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6/ A/48/482, sect. II.

7/ A/48/449.

extracts of data received from the various organizations in the preparation of future annual reports, within existing resources;

3. Reiterates - while noting the cooperation of some United Nations specialized agencies and programmes at the Seventeenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, the need for the Secretary-General or his representative to be invited to the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties;

4. Encourages - while welcoming the decision of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to provide information regarding the Seventeenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting - the Parties to provide to the Secretary-General, on a continuing basis, more information and documents covering all aspects of Antarctica, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on his evaluations thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session;

5. Welcomes the commitment made by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties under chapter 17 of Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 8/ as provided for in article III of the Antarctic Treaty, to continue:

(a) To ensure that data and information resulting from scientific research activities conducted in Antarctica are freely available to the international community;

(b) To enhance access of the international scientific community and specialized agencies of the United Nations to such data and information, including the encouragement of periodic seminars and symposia;

6. Urges the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to build on the agreements achieved at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly as noted in paragraph 5 of the present resolution, and, in this connection, actively to consider the possibility of organizing an annual seminar/symposium covering issues relating to the environment, commencing in 1994, with international participation as wide as possible, including that of international organizations such as the United Nations;

7. Also urges the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to establish monitoring and implementation mechanisms to ensure compliance with the provisions of the 1991 Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection;

8. Reiterates its call, in welcoming the ban on prospecting and mining in and around Antarctica for the next fifty years by Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties in accordance with the Madrid Protocol for the ban to be made permanent;

8/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publications, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

9. Also reiterates its call that any move at drawing up an international convention to establish a nature reserve or world park in Antarctica and its dependent and associated ecosystems must be negotiated with the full participation of the international community;

10. Reaffirms, while welcoming the concrete steps taken by the Secretariat through the publication on Antarctica, by the Department of Public Information, the need to promote further public awareness of the importance of Antarctica to the ecosystem, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide relevant materials on Antarctica through the Department of Public Information within existing resources;

11. Encourages the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to increase the level of cooperation and collaboration with a view to reducing the number of scientific stations in Antarctica and to handle tourism effectively through transparent environmental impact assessment studies;

12. Urges the international community to ensure that all activities in Antarctica are carried out exclusively for the purpose of peaceful scientific investigation and that all such activities will ensure the maintenance of international peace and security and the protection of the Antarctic environment and area for the benefit of all mankind;

13. Urges all States Members of the United Nations to cooperate with the Secretary-General on matters pertaining to Antarctica;

14. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session the item entitled "Question of Antarctica".